

REMARKS

Claims 16 through 25, and 44 through 48 are pending in this application. Claims 18, 19, 24, and 25 have been amended.

The Examiner has allowed claims 16, 17, 20 through 23, and 44 through 48.

Claims 18 and 24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph. The Office Action states that the limitation of "a mixture of particulate carbon (or polymer liquid absorbent) and particles of a thermoplastic binder. . ." is not anywhere disclosed in the original specification.

Claims 18 (and claim 24) provides for a first substrate having a first surface upon which is deposited a composite powder consisting of active particulate carbon (or at least one particulate polymer liquid absorbent) and particles of a thermoplastic binder, wherein the active particulate carbon (or the particulate polymer liquid absorbent) and the particles of a thermoplastic binder form a single, composite structure.

The composite powder of claims 18 and 24 is disclosed on page 2, line 15. Deposit of this composite powder onto a

substrate is disclosed on page 2, line 24. Formation of a single, composite structure is disclosed on page 2, line 30. Thus, the Applicants respectfully submit that, in light of the foregoing, the \$112 rejections are now moot and should be withdrawn.

Claims 18, 19, 24, and 25 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,462,538 to Korpman. However, as stated in the Office Action, the Korpman patent does not teach mixing together the particulate carbon and the pressure sensitive adhesive before the particulate carbon and adhesive are applied to the surface of the substrate.

As stated above, claims 18 and 24 provide for a composite powder consisting of an active particle (such as activated carbon) and particles of a thermoplastic binder. This composite powder is mixed before it is deposited on a substrate. Therefore, claims 18 and 24 are not taught by the Korpman patent.

Claim 19 is dependent upon claim 18, while claim 25 is dependent upon claim 24. The Applicants respectfully submit that claims 19 and 25 are also not taught by the Korpman patent

in light of the conclusion that the Korpman patent does not teach claims 18 and 24.

In light of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that the §102(b) rejection of claims 18, 19, 24, and 25 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 18, 19, 24, and 25 have also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over the Korpman patent. The Office Action states that the Korpman patent teaches spraying a molten pressure sensitive adhesive microfibers and thermoplastic polymer microfibers onto an absorbent article. The Office Action also states that the fact that the particulate carbon is mixed with the pressure sensitive adhesive before the pressure sensitive adhesive is spray coated onto the facing material would not change the functionality of the product, absent evidence that process yields a different product. Furthermore, the Office Action states that it would have been obvious to combine the particulate carbon and the pressure sensitive adhesive because such a combination eliminates an application step and, therefore, it would be a process expedient. The Office Action seems to imply that pre-mixing the particulate carbon and the pressure sensitive adhesive merely eliminates the undesirable step of separately applying a liquid absorbent after

application of an adhesive and results in the same product provided by the Korpman patent.

As stated above, claim 18 (and claim 24) provides for a first substrate having a first surface upon which is deposited a composite powder consisting of active particulate carbon (or a particulate polymer liquid absorbent) and particles of a thermoplastic binder, wherein the active particulate carbon (or particulate polymer liquid absorbent) and the particles of a thermoplastic binder form a single, composite structure.

In contrast to the single, composite structure provided by claims 18 and 24, the Korpman patent provides for a material coated with adhesive microfibers that are, themselves, further coated with a liquid absorbent (see col. 3, lines 15 to 19). The Korpman patent states that the adhesive coating is at least about 0.35 ounces/square yard (see col. 9, lines 59 to 63). This process clearly results in the material being coated with two discrete layers, wherein the first discrete layer is adhesive and the second discrete layer is a liquid absorbent.

Combining the particulate liquid absorbent and the pressure sensitive adhesive into a composite powder does more than merely eliminate an application step. In fact, the composite powder

results in a new product, in which a single, unitary layer is formed, rather than the dual layers taught by the Korpman patent.

Clearly, the Korpman patent does not suggest the desirableness of a single, unitary layer of absorbent and adhesive. In fact, the Korpman patent advocates that first coating a material with adhesive and then coating the adhesive with an absorbent is in itself a patentable improvement over the prior art. Likewise, the Applicants respectfully submit that claims 18 and 24 are also a patentable improvement over the prior art.

Claim 19 depends from claim 18, while claim 25 depends from claim 24. The Applicants respectfully submit that claims 19 and 25 are also not obvious over the Korpman patent in light of the conclusion that claims 18 and 24 are not obvious over the Korpman patent.

Given the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that the §103(a) rejection of claims 18, 19, 24, and 25 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Thus, in light of the foregoing amendments to claims 18, 19, 24, and 25, along with the foregoing remarks, the Applicants respectfully request favorable consideration and that claims 18, 19, 24, and 25 be passed to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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